

Workgroup 2: Governance models and policy contexts

1. Introduction

Within the workgroup 2 of the EU COST Action Unit Urban Agriculture this working paper focuses on urban agriculture in the Emscher Landscape Park (ELP), a regional park in Germany. By means of the description of the reference region, its agricultural areas in regard to challenges, potentials and the existing framework, this work highlights existing governance models and policy contexts of urban agriculture in the ELP. In general the EU Workgroup defines governance as “*the relationship between the local administration and other actors or constituencies*”. Moreover, the municipal level is the focus of this analysis (EU COST 2012). The objective of the paper is to identify policies and governance structures as well as key actors and examples of linking the policy level to other approaches and activities in the reference area ELP. The description focuses on agricultural activities within urban open space.

2. Reference Region (ELP, stakeholders, Government)

In the following, the reference region, important stakeholders and its governmental structure are described to draw the framework and conditions for this urban agricultural area:

The reference region ELP, which is located in the federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany along the River Emscher, is part of an agglomeration of eleven cities and four counties, the so-called “Ruhr Metropolis” (see map no. 1).

Approximately 5.2 million inhabitants live in the largest urban agglomeration in Germany covering an area of 4.435km². Within the European Union, this metropolitan region is also the third largest urban and most populated area after the Metropolis of London and Paris. (SOURCE: IT.NRW 2012). To understand the circumstances, which lead to the establishment of the Emscher Landscape Park, it is necessary to take a short historical retrospect of the development of this area.

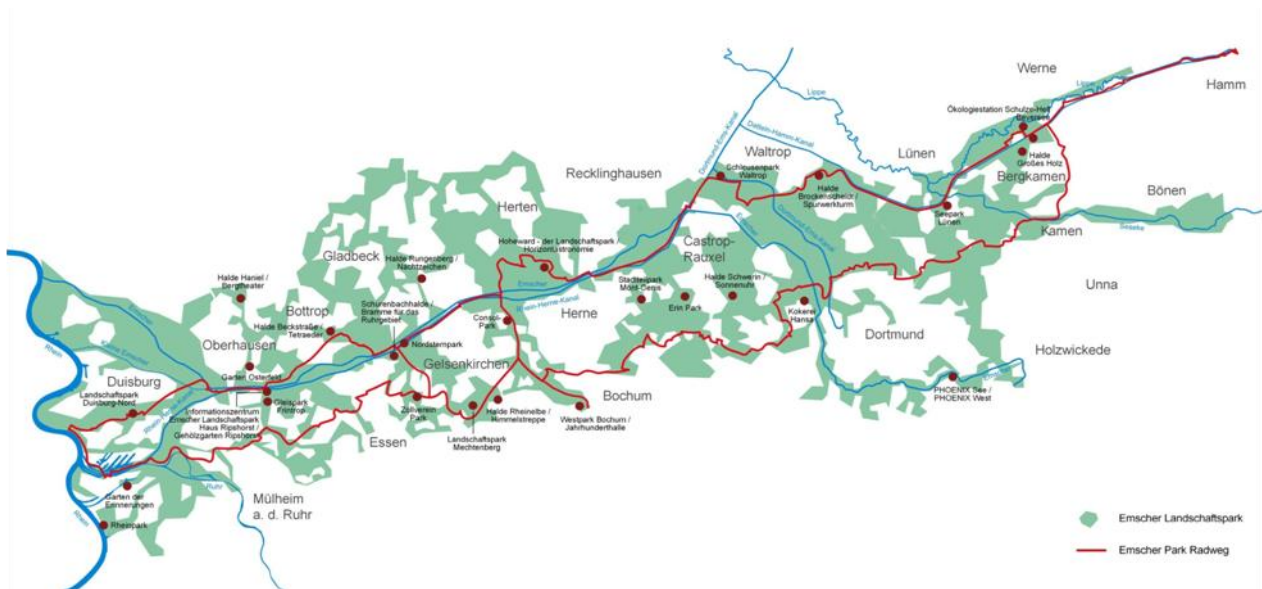
Since the 20th century, the region has been focal point of the industrial development and immigration in Germany due to its growing mining and steel industry. After the world economic crisis (1958 and 1971) and the increasing globalisation, the region has been affected by deep structural changes. To set a sign for change and to give new inputs, several structural programmes were initiated by regional, national and international support structures (e.g. The International Building Exhibition Emscher Park (1989-1999), European Culture Capital (2010), application for Green Capital (2015)).

Within the International Building Exhibition (initiated by the federal state North-Rhine Westphalia) the concept of a regional park - the “Emscher Landscape Park” - was



MAP1: LOCATION OF THE RUHR METROPOLIS, RVR 2012

implemented and constructed to revalue the industrially characterized cultural landscape and to initiate new impulses for further development (RVR, WEBSITE 2012).



MAP1: EMSCHER LANDSCAPE PARK IN THE RUHR METROPOLIS, RVR 2012

After the international building exhibition, the master plan ELP 2010, which was created under the direction of the Project Ruhr GmbH¹, provided a basis for the design of the park and was declared a regional objective by political decision makers in 2005. One year later, the Ruhr Regional Association (RVR) became responsible for the implementation of the ELP. *"In cooperation with 20 municipalities², two districts, three regional governments, the State of North-Rhine Westphalia and the water company Lippeverband/Emschergenossenschaft it is responsible for both: conceptual further development and maintenance management"* (AUER 2012: 17)

Today, the ELP is the central park and green belt of the metropolitan area Ruhr with an extension of 30km from North to South and 80km from West to East, a green and open space which comes up to the total size of 465km². Although the given name "Emscher Landscape Park" may create a certain association, it is not a traditional park, but an unconventional, polycentric park, built by a regional network of landscape and district parks. The name was also chosen as a provocation as well as a vision to support the transformation of the highly polluted and industrial sewage channel *Emscher* back to a recultivated and clean stream (planned for 2020, realized by the *Emscher Genossenschaft*). Within the environment of infrastructure and settlements the park consists of several open spaces and connecting paths as well as pieces of green areas and mosaic of nature (RVR, WEBSITE 2012).

¹ The Project Ruhr GmbH was a subsidiary company of the federal state of NRW to organize the realization of projects within the regional park from 2000-2006)

² The 20 Municipalities of the Emscher Landscape Park are the following: Duisburg, Mülheim an der Ruhr, Oberhausen, Bottrop, Gladbeck, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Bochum, Herne, Castrop-Rauxel, Herten, Recklinghausen, Waltrop, Dortmund, Lünen, Bergkamen, Kamen, Werne, Bönen, Holzwickede as well as Recklinghausen and Unna Districts

3. Agriculture in the ELP

Due to the industrialisation and the increase of urban development, cities grew and incorporated more rural villages and surrounding area. The remaining farms and their fields became part of the urban agglomerations of the Ruhr Metropolis. Today, based on the open green space, land for cultivation is mainly used by commercial, productive agriculture and on a small scale in allotment gardens, but also in a few projects on fellow-land.

Approximately 170km² (37%) of the area within the shape of our reference area, the Emscher Landscape Park, is in agricultural use for farming, grassland and specialized horticulture. In addition with the areas of fallow land and allotment gardens the percentage of land increases to 41% (about 192km² of the total ELP area) (RUHR REGIONAL ASSOCIATION RUHR 2011).

Since inner-urban activities of cultivation are rare, projects like roof-top gardening and vertical farming should not be the main focus of this work. Only one example, the research project “*InFarming*” experimenting with vertical farming, is known from the city of Oberhausen. Generally, the development of new gardening projects is rather low in comparison to other regions in Germany.

The definition of urban agriculture in this paper is modified according to LOHRBERG (2001). Thus urban agriculture includes not only conventional agriculture, but also non-commercial allotment gardens within urban agglomerations as part of open space planning and design (LOHRBERG 2001:5).

4. Existing framework –Governance and legal laws

There are innumerable stakeholders in the Emscher Landscape Park with very different backgrounds. Some of the most important key actors are:

a) in the field of Institutional actors:

- Ministry of Climate Protection, Environment, Agriculture, Nature and Consumer Protection of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Ministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Landwirtschaft, Natur- und Verbraucherschutz Nordrhein-Westfalen, (MKULNV NRW))
- The Ruhr Regional Association (Regionalverband Ruhr, (RVR))
RVR is the regional hub of the eleven urban municipalities and responsible for developing the open spaces and the formal regional planning for the whole metropolitan area embracing 53 communities.
- Municipalities of the ELP (including 20 city councils and two district governments)

b) other institutions and semi-governmental associations

- Chamber of Agriculture North Rhine-Westphalia (Landwirtschaftskammer Nordrhein-Westfalen, LWK NRW)
- Department of Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection (Landesamt für Natur, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz in NRW)

c) farmers and associates (e.g. families, employees)

In 2013 approximately 300 farms cultivated land within the regional park ELP.

d) associations and NGO's

- Farmers' Associations (Westfälisch-Lippischer Landwirtschaftsverband (WLV) and Rheinischer Landwirtschaftsverband (RLV) - part of Deutscher Bauernverband e.V., Arbeitsgemeinschaft für bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (ABL), etc.
 - Environmental Associations (NABU, BUND, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur- und Umweltbildung Landesverband NRW, e.V.)
 - Associations of Allotment Gardens (Landesverband Westfalen und Lippe der Kleingärtnern e.V. , Interessensverband der Kleingärtner NRW e.V.; Kreisverband Oberhausen der Kleingärtner e.V.; Bahn Landwirtschaft Hauptverband)
- Allotment Gardens have a long history in the reference region and cover 11.6 km² of Metropolis Ruhr (RVR 2012).

e) local population and citizens

User of the ELP (*e.g. gardeners, consumer of locally produced food, city-dwellers, excursionists, sportsman...*)

f) economic players (promoters, landowners, associations)

- Land owners (e.g. RAG Montan Industries, Thyssen Krupp Liegenschaften, water company Emscher-Genossenschaft/Lippeverband, churches, foundations, nobility etc.)
- Agribusiness: companies down- and upstream in the value added chain

g) research institutions

Universities (*e.g. University of Duisburg-Essen, TU Dortmund, FH Südwestfalen ...*) and their research programs (*e.g. the interdisciplinary research project KuLaRuhr*)

h) networks and initiatives

- Only few initiatives exist, which also include an agricultural aspect, for example the regional network „Allianz für Fläche“(MKULNV NRW Website 2012).
- For gardening activities, especially the number of urban gardening projects and networks (community gardens in Metropolis urbaneoasen.de; Stiftungsgemeinschaft anstiftung & ertomis) are currently increasing.

5. Problems and challenges

Stakeholder of urban agriculture in the ELP face especially following challenges:

▪ **Decrease of farmland**

Since land is a limited factor, the open space in the urban reference region is affected by high pressures. Land, which is used for agricultural or gardening activities, is permanently reduced and used for other purposes, e.g. establishment of industries, infrastructure, settlements, forests, recreational parks etc.

In Metropolis Ruhr on average every year about 1,000 ha of farmland are converted to other uses (Illustration 1). Subsequently, the basis for cultivation is often withdrawn from the users and this often leads to the abandonment of projects and activities (IT.NRW 2012).

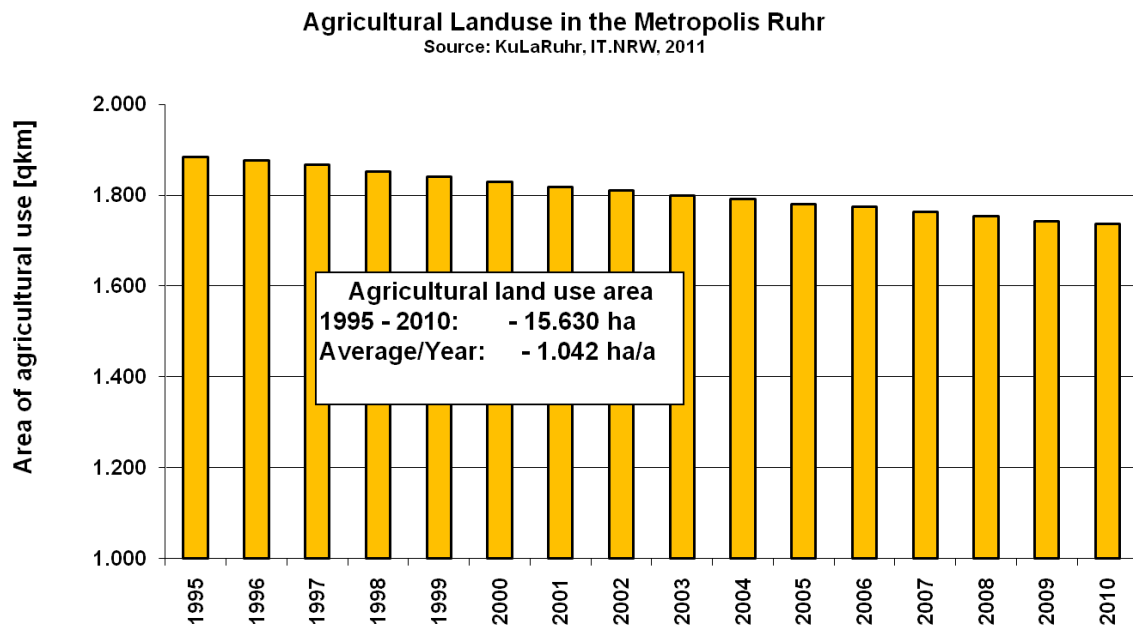


ILLUSTRATION 1: AGRICULTURAL LAND USE: DECREASE OF LAND 1995-2010, SOURCE: IT-NRW 2012
MODIFIED BY THE RESEARCH PROJECT KULARUHR (CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE NRW /RVR)

- Limited availability of land**

A high percentage of land is leased and often on the short-term. This prevents its users (farmers as well as small-scale gardeners) from managing and realizing projects and investments aiming on mid- and long-term development. In ELP, leasing contracts are usually lasting one year; meanwhile mid- and long-term lease is quite common in other regions in Germany (s. IT.NRW 2012, illustration 2).

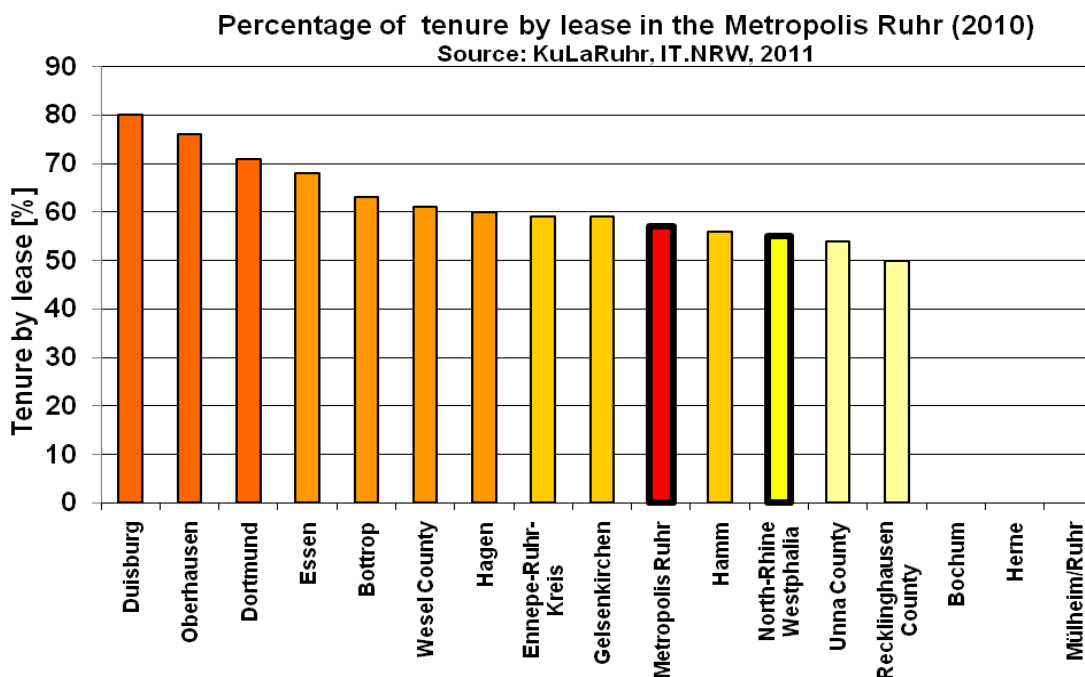


ILLUSTRATION 2: PERCENTAGE OF LEASED LAND BY MUNICIPALITY IN 2011, SOURCE: IT-NRW 2012
MODIFIED BY THE RESEARCH PROJECT KULARUHR (CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE NRW /RVR)

- **Resign of farms**

Due to the demographic change, but also due to economic development farm enterprises in Emscher Landscape Park abandon from active farming. A high proportion of farmers have no successors to run the farm after their retirement. In case of private farmland it is mainly leased or sold by nearby farmers (Landwirtschaftskammer NRW 2012: 29ff).

- **Lack of cooperation between different sectors**

Especially in the past a lack in communication between different sectors, particularly from agriculture, nature protection and planning on local and regional level has hampered common strategies for synergy generation. Although a lot of strategic structural programs and projects were carried out within the last 25 years, the participation of the population in planning, implementing and giving responsibility to people is rather low, probably based on long-term installed habitual patterns and top-down approaches. Processes of participation (e.g. common approach of land owner, municipality and users for gardening or educational projects) do only exist punctually on a small-scale level. In general, users of land (especially farmers and gardeners on leased land, but also residents) have no direct influence on land transformation and are dependent on determination of communal/state parliaments or land owners (Häpke 2012: 92).

- **Limited scope of action**

Despite various tools of tax-reduction and grants for the agricultural sector, from a financial point of view – isolated from the whole agricultural sector – it is worth to sell their land as construction zones. Therefore, new approaches and innovative ideas have to be found or created, to activate and give other stakeholders shares. Agriculture and gardening could take over responsibilities and participate in landscape design as well as cultivation and aesthetical open space management.

6. Potentials

The following potentials of agricultural cultivation could be identified in the reference region:

- **Commitment of municipalities:**

The federal government, the municipalities and relevant stakeholders agreed on the fact, that urban agriculture is an element of the cultural landscape and the ELP. The informal planning tool and foundation of the commitment is the “*Master Plan Emscher Landscape Park 2010*” (initiated by associated governmental bodies of the regional planning). In future, the importance of communal and inter-communal cooperation with stakeholders in the field of agriculture should be strengthened (GAILING 2007:92ff).

- **Multifunctional Agriculture:**

Farms in the urban agglomeration of the ELP are characterized by a diverse, dynamic, adapted, innovative, and demand-oriented agriculture, which is historically and structurally integrated in the area of the Ruhr Metropolis. Agriculture can deliver and provide among economical aspects also social and environmental services (LANDWIRTSCHAFTSKAMMER NRW 2012:29). So far, these services are provided on a small-scale and only selectively, since a regional communication and marketing strategy or platform is not yet in place.

- **Innovations and experiences supported by structural action programmes:**

The structural programmes, financed by European (European Cultural Capital Essen 2010), national or regional funds (International Building Exhibition Emscher Park 1989-1999), funding for maintenance activities in the ELP between RVR and the federal state 2006-2016) supported the development and establishment of the regional park ELP and urban agriculture as one part. For the application processes the municipalities of the Metropolis

worked closely together and created inter-communal networks. Informal planning tools and guidelines built the framework of this process: For example:

- Masterplan Emscher Landschaftspark 2005;
- Law of organizing institution of the ELP between RVR and federal state of NRW (2006-2016)³,
- Memorandum- Productive Park/*Denkschrift Produktiver Park* (guideline) 2010).

Within the framework structural programme of the International Building Exhibition Emscher Park, a large budget was available to initiate projects and to experiment. In this framework new innovative approaches were supported to experience ways, how urban agriculture could constantly be integrated as an element of the cultural landscape (HÄPKE 2012:73). In some places, examples served as innovative role models, e.g.

- Productive agriculture in combination with aesthetical land art design and other services (*Mechtenberg- Essen*);
- Educational center in an old farm building (*Ingenhamshof, Dortmund*), in combination of farming and to offer new services
- Certified organic meat cutting hall (*Neulandbetrieb, Bergkamen*) as part of the agricultural value chain process.



PHOTOS: LAND ART IN COMBINATION WITH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, MECHTENBERG- ESSEN, RVR 2010

• Participation of stakeholders in planning processes

In preparation of the development of a new regional plan Ruhr Metropolis in 2014, the RVR as legitimate body organizes open discussions ("*Regionale Diskurse*") as a tool of the informal planning process and to enable a participatory process and communication. A regional discussion to address issues around agriculture and forestry is planned and relevant results should be included in a later working paper version (RVR WEBSITE 2012).

7. Conclusion

To conclude the overview of the policies and governmental structures regarding urban agriculture in the regional park Emscher Landscape Park of the Ruhr Metropolis, the results should be analysed on basis of the structure and table of the first EU Cost Workshop in Aachen.

Conventional agriculture is protected by national and regional law. The German construction law §201 for example defines conventional agricultural production and activities. Nevertheless no policies and legal strategies exist for urban agriculture neither on national

³ The Federal State of North Rhine Westphalia and RVR have concluded a contract regarding the constructional protection of the major sites. The RVR is investing an annual amount of 2.5 million euro until 2016; in addition the Federal State of North Rhine Westphalia will contribute 3.6 million euro

nor on regional level within Germany. However, agricultural activities are often key elements in policies of other departments (Environment, City planning, Food security, Architecture...). In case of the ELP, some informal planning strategies, like the “*Masterplan ELP*” (2005, Ruhr GmbH) and the “*Guideline for agriculture in the Ruhr Metropolis*” (2012, Chamber of agriculture) define urban agriculture and open space activities as important elements of the Ruhr Metropolis (LANDWIRTSCHAFTSKAMMER 2012:34, PROJEKT RUHR GMBH 2005).

In the field of land cultivation in the reference region, a lot of different identified stakeholders are directly or indirectly involved in processes concerning the agricultural sector. By the effort of different stakeholders (amongst others governmental bodies, municipalities and association of the Ruhr Metropolis), the region received funds of different structural programmes. The funds were used to support the planning and implementation of innovative projects and processes in the cultural landscape, especially during the International Building Exhibition Emscher Park. Nevertheless, the link from a top-down to a bottom-up approach between governmental structures and urban population is still insufficient during periods where there is no external funding available. In the ELP, farmers in urban agglomeration are threatened by loss of agricultural leased land and the resulting lack of planning reliability. Small-scale initiatives from civil society (for e.g. gardening projects) often are hampered by administrative restrictions. Most of the municipalities are limited in scope of action due to budget shortages. Nevertheless, some processes of participation, also in the field of agriculture, are currently running successfully (e.g. in preparation to the regional plan), trying to connect various stakeholders and enable different approaches (RVR WEBSITE 2012).

According to the continuum approach of WG2, urban agricultural activities show various characteristics in the ELP. Examples of urbanised gardeners (in a smaller extension and amount) exist as well as agricultural producers in an urban environment (in larger extension and higher amount). Few small scale gardening projects on fallow and public land (e.g. international and intercultural gardens) could be considered as the purest form of urbanities in agriculture (see schema 1). On the continuum, forms of allotment gardens would follow as examples of land cultivation in between social, ecological and economic characteristics. The model of conventional agriculture in combination as service provider for its urban surroundings could be representative for the category of agricultural producers in an urban environment.



SCHEMA 1: THE EMSCHER LANDSCAPE PARK IN THE CONTEXT OF WG 2

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9. List of abbreviations

Abb.	english	german
COST	European Union European Cooperation in Science and Research	<i>Initiative für Europäische Zusammenarbeit in Wissenschaft und Technik</i>
ELP	Emscher Landscape Park	<i>Emscher Landschaftspark</i>
EU	European Union	<i>Europäische Union</i>
IBA	International Building Exhibition	<i>Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Landschaftspark</i>
MKULNV	Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Agriculture, Nature and Consumer Protection	<i>Ministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Landwirtschaft, Natur- und Verbraucherschutz</i>
NRW	Federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia	<i>Bundesland Nordrhein- Westfalen</i>
RVR	Ruhr Regional Association	<i>Regionalverband Ruhr</i>
UA	Urban agriculture	<i>Urbane Landwirtschaft</i>